

# **Office of the Vice President for Minority Affairs and Vice Provost for Diversity**

## **Diversity Appraisal Report, 2004**

### **Introduction**

This report provides an overview of the comprehensive array of programs and initiatives in the Office of the Vice President for Minority Affairs and Vice Provost for Diversity that support students at the pre-college, undergraduate, and graduate level, and that enhance campus-wide diversity efforts. The report responds to the December 2003 request by President Lee Huntsman, Vice President Nancy Barceló, and the Diversity Appraisal Steering Committee for a unit-by-unit self-assessment of diversity initiatives at the University of Washington. The report sets out to address the following questions:

- 1) How is diversity a visible and active part of your unit?
- 2) What are the specific ways that diversity is integrated into your academic mission in regard to your curricula, your undergraduate and graduate students, your faculty, and staff?
- 3) What are the ways in which you have structured your unit so diversity is institutionalized as part of your criteria for success?

These questions seem especially relevant in light of recent discussions concerning the role of diversity in higher education, nation-wide challenges to affirmative action, and the UW Decennial Review, which asked the University to review issues of representation among diverse students and faculty.

This report is organized as follows: 1) OMA's mission and role within the University; 2) historical overview of OMA; 3) student access and opportunities; 4) student development and retention; 5) engagement with the external community; 6) staff and administrative diversity; 7) curriculum and research; 8) climate; and 9) summary and recommendations.

## **OMA's Mission and Role within the University**

While the Office of Minority Affairs has evolved during the past thirty years, its mission and core values have remained virtually intact. The current mission statement of OMA is as follows:

The mission of the Office of the Vice President for Minority Affairs is to ensure the access and academic success of a diverse student population through the advancement of knowledge, academic excellence, diversity and the promotion of values, principles, and a climate that enriches the campus experience for all.

This mission is supported by six core values that guide the work of the organization: the pursuit of academic excellence, diversity and social justice, access and educational equity, collaboration, assessment and accountability, and inclusiveness. These core values, to some extent, reflect the premise that a university education has significant social and economic benefits for all students and society at large. Among these benefits is the critical role of preparing all students for active and meaningful participation in society. Diversity is an integral part of this equation. As Patricia Gurin (1999) suggested in her arguments on the compelling need for diversity in higher education in the Michigan Case:

“Students educated in diverse settings are more motivated and better able to participate in an increasingly complex democracy. They are better able to understand and consider multiple perspectives, deal with the conflicts that different perspectives sometimes create, and appreciate the common values and integrative forces that harness differences in pursuit of a common good. Students can best develop a capacity to understand the ideas and feelings of others on an environment characterized by the presence of diverse others, equality among peers, and discussion under rules of civil discourse. These factors are present on a campus with a racially diverse student body.”

### *Students Served by OMA*

Although OMA fully embraces the inclusive definition of diversity identified in the call for appraisal reports, it is also important to acknowledge that OMA has traditionally focused its efforts on students

from underrepresented groups (African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders) and students from low income backgrounds who are the first in their family to attend college, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or national backgrounds. In fact, over 22 percent of all the students we serve today are Caucasian students. We also recognize that our students bring with them multiple identities (GBLT, disabled, religion, etc.) and seek our services and support because our staff is sensitive to their needs and aspirations.

In addition to the social and cultural diversity described above, OMA also serves students with a heterogeneous academic profile. This may include students that are at the top of their high school graduating class in terms of GPA and SAT scores, as well as students who do not score as well on these measures but demonstrate academic promise on a variety of alternate predictors (e.g., leadership potential and creative abilities).<sup>1</sup> OMA is also cognizant of the fact that all students have differential levels of preparation, so we tailor our services to encompass this wide range of academic preparedness. Differential levels of preparation may reflect any of the following factors: high school curriculum (presence or absence of advanced placement or college preparation courses); rural vs. urban education; inner city vs. suburban education; private vs. public schooling; access to educational technology; quality of teacher training; quality of school advising services; and parent's educational level. This heterogeneity in social, cultural, and academic backgrounds is an important attribute that we fully embrace in our day-to-day work.

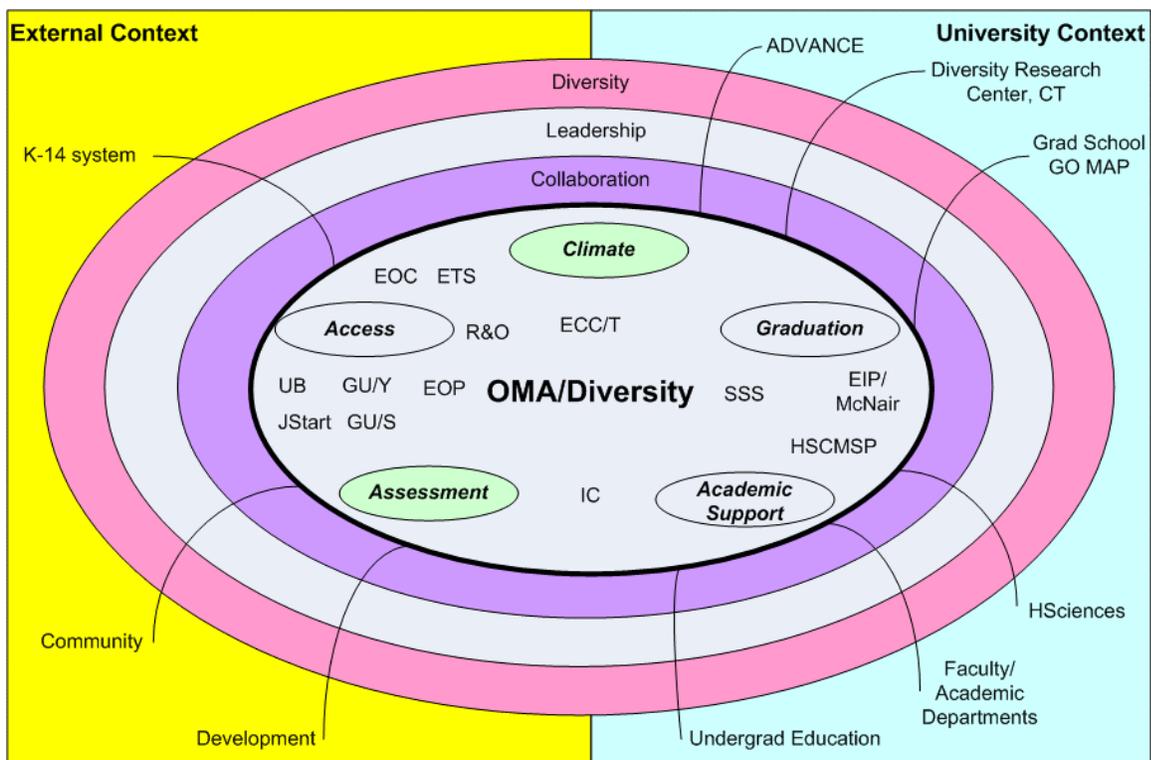
### *OMA's Role Within the University*

The diagram below illustrates OMA's work within the University and the larger community. This multi-layered diagram, viewed as a set of concentric circles, identifies the core areas that define the work of the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, UW Diversity Scholars are high achieving students of color (with an average GPA of 3.3) who receive services from OMA. On the other hand, Bridge Program students are students who have an uneven academic profile (e.g., either competitive GPAs and relatively low SAT score, or high SAT scores and relatively low GPAs) but demonstrate promise on other predictors and are admitted to the UW on the condition that they meet specific academic expectations during their first year of college.

organization: access, academic support, graduation, assessment, and climate. The center ring also identifies the major programs that are housed within OMA, from pre-college to graduate/professional student services. (Each of these programs is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.) The outer rings reflect the evolving nature of OMA’s work in providing leadership for diversity efforts and in working collaboratively with other units to support students, staff, and faculty. Cross departmental collaboration is a value critical to our long-term success in providing quality academic support services to students from diverse backgrounds, and in creating a climate for enhancing diversity in our institution. Collaboration is deeply ingrained in the fabric of our work and we take great pride in the partnerships we have developed over the years with various administrative units and academic departments across our campus.



OMA’s work is framed within the larger context of the University mission of research, teaching, and service, and through OMA’s linkages with academic departments, the K-14 education system, our relationship with alumni and donors, and the larger community. Diversity is central to OMA’s work, and OMA plays a critical role within the University in promoting and supporting diversity initiatives and

programming. Diversity is indeed an active and visible part of OMA's work, and is embedded in our organizational mission and our core values.

## **Historical Overview of OMA**

Nearly forty years ago, student activism was the catalyst for what has become a University commitment to excellence for students from diverse backgrounds. In the spring of 1968, minority students, and their supporters, staged a sit-in at the Administration building to demand, among other things, greater minority representation on campus and in support services—academic advising/counseling and tutoring—for new students. In 1969, responding to student demands, President Charles Odegaard launched a set of initiatives to increase the enrollment of minority students and the establishment of a tutoring program under the administration of the Faculty Senate. Subsequently, in 1970, Dr. Samuel E. Kelly became the University of Washington's first Vice President for Minority Affairs, one of the first minority-student focused administrative positions in the country. This position would provide systemic attention to issues of diversity and academic support for underrepresented students, with this appointment position reporting directly to the President of the University. This reporting arrangement has afforded the Vice President direct access to the key decision-makers within the University and made it possible to centralize existing services to address the academic needs of the minority student population, to facilitate minority student's transition to the UW, and to prepare them to meet the University's academic and institutional demands.

Since Dr. Kelly's tenure, four Vice Presidents (Drs. Ewa Fields, Herman Lujan, Robert Pozos, and Myron Apilado) served as stewards for the organization from the late 1970s through 2001. Seeking to redefine OMA's role within the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Dr. Nancy "Rusty" Barceló, became the 6<sup>th</sup> Vice President for Minority Affairs in July 2001. Soon after her arrival, Dr. Barceló solicited input from the entire OMA staff and conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the existing service model. Based on the results of this assessment, Dr. Barceló opted to reorganize the division into two major units:

Pre-college and Academic Advancement. The intent of this organizational change was to enhance the work of OMA's various units and to increase the organization's collaboration with the colleges and schools within the University. Through this new organizational structure, OMA strives to become a national model in designing, implementing, and assessing effective academic support programs for students who come from a broad spectrum of backgrounds. We expect that these efforts will enable each entering cohort to maximize its learning potential and achieve optimal levels of academic excellence in a challenging environment.

Building on its historical emphasis, OMA actively recruits and provides academic support services to students from diverse backgrounds and trains them to become active participants in a pluralistic, diverse society. With its evolving responsibilities, OMA also provides leadership for the entire University on matters of diversity. For example, Vice President Barceló also holds the title of Vice Provost for Diversity. Her dual titles allow her to provide university-wide leadership on the development, implementation, and evaluation of diversity programming and policies. In this role, the Vice President facilitates the coordination and implementation of professional development on diversity for university faculty and staff. In this dual role, the Vice President also serves as a strong advocate for the development of curricula and research related to diversity on the University of Washington campuses, promoting the development of a university-sponsored diversity research center.

## **Student Access and Opportunities**

The Office of Minority Affairs has responsibility on the Seattle campus for developing a strong, seamless "educational pipeline" that brings students from diverse communities into the University of Washington. This responsibility is realized through an array of programmatic efforts and collaborative partnerships with K-12 public and private schools, community agencies, the corporate sector, the federal government, and diverse communities. The outcome of these efforts has been development and implementation of programs that prepare low-income, first generation college, and underrepresented students for post-

secondary education (a description of each of our pre-college and recruitment programs is included in Appendix A). The origin of this approach was the establishment of the Special Education Program that evolved into the present-day Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) in the late 1960s. Today, EOP is the foundation of OMA's family of programs that are designed to provide educational opportunities for underrepresented and educationally/economically disadvantaged students in our state.

The mission and goal of OMA's K-14, "educational pipeline" initiatives, is to increase the pool of college-ready students to successfully transition into any of our State's higher education institutions, with a special emphasis on the UW. OMA believes that widening the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences will yield a student body that is reflective of our State's demographic and social make-up. Equally important, it will also produce an institution that is strategically positioned to tap the full range of energy, creativity, and critical thinking from diverse voices and perspectives that will help our University create new knowledge and bring new discoveries to the forefront in the future. OMA's pre-college preparation and recruitment model, administered and coordinated through our pre-college Directors committee, embodies this philosophy, as we endeavor to make the University of Washington more accessible, inclusive, and intellectually rich.

The principal unit charged with impacting the University's undergraduate diversity enrollment is OMA's Recruitment and Outreach Unit. The work of this unit, and its campus collaborators, has yielded a 32% increase in the enrollment of students of color in the past year. The recruitment staff employs a model that emphasizes recruiting the family, not just the student. This is accomplished by building a parent component into each of the recruitment activities carried out by the unit. As visible agents of the institution, the recruitment staff is also responsible for keeping the community informed about changes in admissions policies and assuring the community that the University welcomes and embraces diversity.

OMA's Recruitment Unit maintains a strong relationship with the Office of Admissions in Student Affairs through the joint appointment of a Director that works both with OMA and Admissions. The recruitment staff is also involved with the comprehensive review and reading of freshman applications, a distinctive admission systems partnership not found in many other universities. This collaborative approach has facilitated the crafting of admissions policies and the shaping of institutional diversity recruitment efforts that were created and implemented in the post I-200 era. For example, because of the interconnection between OMA and Admissions, and because of the compelling diversity interest, the University has utilized a student prospecting system that allows the staff to track, communicate, and promote campus recruitment events. OMA was also involved in shaping policy directions for transfer student admissions. OMA has a dedicated staff person responsible for transfer student recruitment. Finally, through the collaborative relationship with Undergraduate Admissions, OMA administrators are involved in supervising the Gates Foundation Washington Achievers outreach and mentoring program and with the selection of UW Diversity Scholars.

The University of Washington, through the work of OMA, is also one of the few higher education institutions nationwide with a full complement of federally funded educational outreach programs. Evidence of this fact includes six Department of Education TRIO outreach grants and two GEAR UP partnership grants totaling \$8 million annually. While the principal focus of these programs is to provide support for the educational development of low-income and first-generation college students and curricular planning and college application assistance, they also work to transform school culture and expectations throughout the State of Washington. Federal funding to support our outreach efforts has been in place since the early 1970s. Today, federal funding accounts for 64% of our organizational operating budget, underscoring the importance of extramural funding in our diversity efforts.

The map below identifies the multiple sites through which OMA pre-college programs and recruitment staff connects with students, families, and the broader community. This is the most visible component of



under the umbrella of our Academic Advancement Group (each of the units under this framework is identified and described in Appendix A). As a result of these efforts, and in collaboration with University schools and colleges, OMA also plays a critical role in campus-wide development and retention efforts.

OMA has served more than 20,000 students from diverse backgrounds throughout Washington since 1982. The University of Washington, thanks in part to the work of OMA, graduates 60% of all minority students in the State of Washington. Many of these students are now our state's teachers, lawyers, civil servants, engineers, and the like. In the last decade, through our collective efforts, we have increased underrepresented freshmen retention to 89%, from 77% in the 1985-1990 period. We have also increased underrepresented graduation rates to 58%, from 36% in the 1985-1990 period. The tables below show retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students compared to peer institutions across the country. This data places the University of Washington in select company relative to our peer institutions in terms of freshmen retention and graduation rates for students of color. While we have accomplished a lot in the past few years, much work remains if we are to become the model for diversity work in the entire country.

### Average Freshman Retention Rates (1998-2001 cohorts)\*

Washington HEC Board 25 Peer Institutions	Graduation Rates
University of Virginia	97%
University of California, Los Angeles	97%
Cornell University, Statutory Colleges	96%
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	96%
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	95%
University of California, San Diego	94%
University of California, Irvine	93%
University of Florida	92%
University of Wisconsin, Madison	91%
University of California, Davis	91%
Texas A&M University, College Station	89%
Michigan State University	89%
University of Pittsburgh	87%
Ohio State University	85%
University of Iowa	84%
University of Missouri, Columbia	84%
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	83%
University of Kentucky	79%
University of Hawaii	78%
University of Illinois, Chicago	78%
University of Arizona	77%
University of Utah	75%
University of Cincinnati	73%
University of New Mexico	72%

\* Source: US News & World Report "America's Best College" 2004 Edition (2003)  
 \*\* Source: UW Student Data Base (data contained only Summer / Autumn Entrants).

### Aggregate 6-Year Graduation Rates for Entering Freshmen (1993-1996)\* by Peer Institution

Washington HEC Board 25 Peer Institutions	Graduation Rates
University of Virginia	92%
Cornell University, Statutory Colleges	90%
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	83%
University of California, Los Angeles	81%
University of California, San Diego	80%
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	80%
University of California, Davis	75%
University of Wisconsin, Madison	75%
University of California, Irvine	74%
Texas A&M University, College Station	72%
University of Florida	71%
Michigan State University	67%
University of Iowa	64%
University of Missouri, Columbia	63%
University of Pittsburgh	62%
Ohio State University	56%
University of Kentucky	56%
University of Arizona	54%
University of Hawaii	53%
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	51%
University of Utah	47%
University of Cincinnati	45%
University of New Mexico	41%
University of Illinois, Chicago	40%

\* Source: 2003 NCAA Graduation - Rates Report (Website)  
 \*\* Source: UW Student Data Base (data contained only Summer / Autumn Entrants).

### *OMA Student Development Model*

OMA's student development approach emphasizes the development of the "whole student" not just the academic being. We believe that nurturing the cultural, artistic, and social facets of who we are, as individuals, will produce a more well-rounded student who will be able to contribute to society in more meaningful ways. This transformative practice can serve as a model for student development.

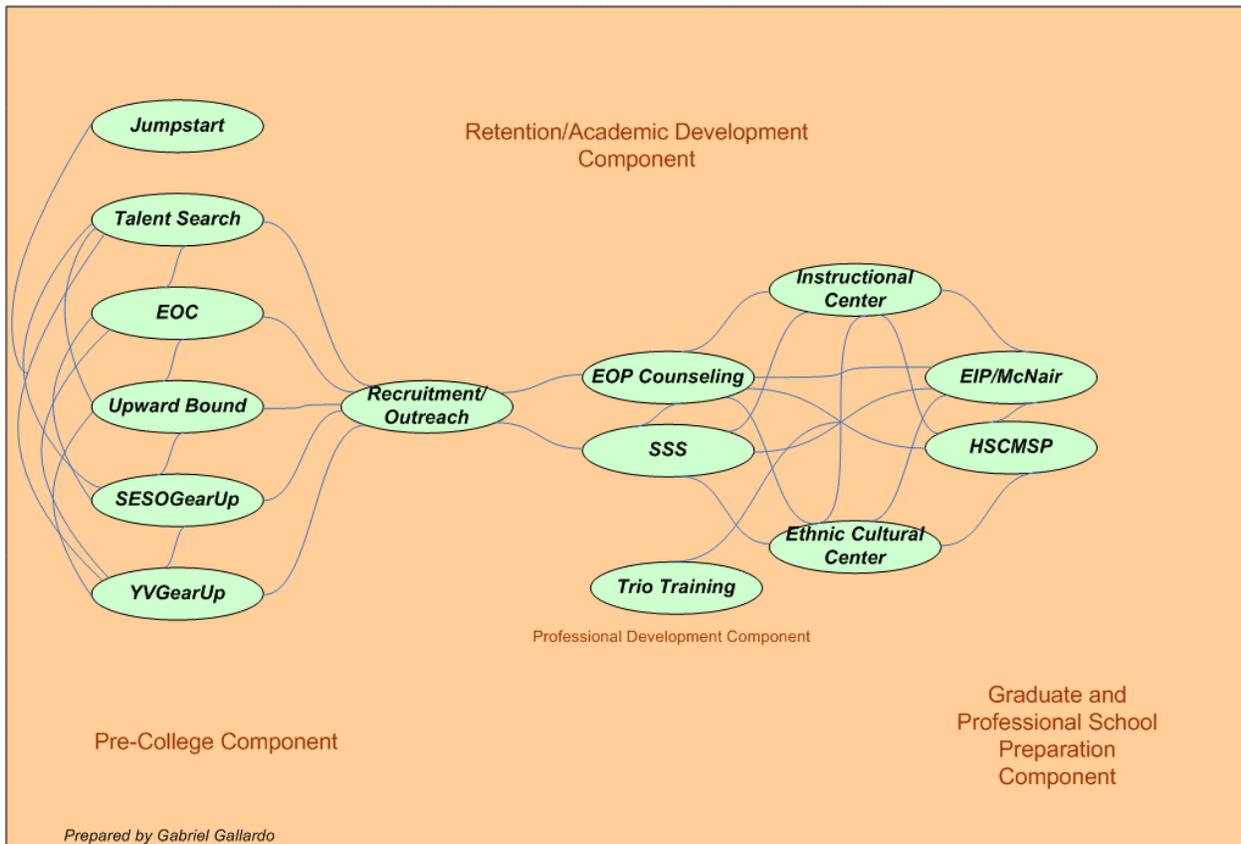
Through their own lived experiences, students bring with them important assets such as mastering different languages, maneuvering multiple realities, and negotiating social, economic, and political barriers. In this respect, OMA does not embrace the "deficit model" that is often employed by academic institutions and practitioners whereby diverse students are viewed as having some shortfall or academic

inadequacies when they come to our institutions. Instead, OMA views students as having many positive attributes and potential. As such, our jobs as educators is to identify and nurture those assets so diverse students can have a productive, rich, and intellectually satisfying academic experience.

OMA's development and retention model harnesses the academic potential of students from diverse backgrounds using the following components: summer transition programs to acquaint new students with the culture and expectations of the University; orientation and first year programs to inform, acquaint, and guide students in their transition to the University environment; academic and financial advising services to help students navigate the vast array of academic requirements, financial policies, and to successfully transition students into their majors; instructional support and tutoring to help students master the complexities of coursework across a wide array of disciplines; exposure to cultural activities and programming to help students develop a sense of community, cultural identity, and to develop leadership skills; career guidance (in collaboration with Career Services); and graduate preparation services to enable students to prepare for the graduate school application process and acquaint them with the culture of graduate education.

The diagram below identifies the intra-organizational linkages that connect the programmatic components of OMA, from pre-college to graduate preparation. These components are embedded in the educational pipeline concept, as we work on cultivating a cadre of students who bring their talents and skills into the University. This is the framework that under girds our student development model.

## Office of Minority Affairs Program Linkages



OMA’s student development model is also aligned with the emphasis of the University for involving undergraduate students in experiential learning. OMA believes strongly in the experiential learning model whereby students are exposed to curricula and activities outside the standard classroom environment.<sup>2</sup> This may include mentoring, research, and community service opportunities. The goal of these activities is to give students “hands-on” training and skills that enhance or complement the conceptual material presented in the classroom. This has proven to be of tremendous benefit to students, especially students from diverse backgrounds. The research literature suggests that all students benefit from exposure to different learning styles and knowledge frameworks that may emphasize active, tactile, visual, and group learning. The work of our academic advancement programs emphasizes all of these

<sup>2</sup> Some have argued that student activism in the late 1960s and early-1970s was the genesis of experiential learning, and now we find that many in the academic community embrace this model.

components. For example, through our Instructional Center and OMA Mentoring Program, we place students in tutoring or mentoring activities to enable them to not only understand the material more fully, but to teach it to others who are beginning their journey of discovery. These experiences also serve as opportunities for students to grow personally and academically, extending our philosophy of developing the whole student. We also engage students in the research enterprise at the undergraduate level so they develop the analytical and methodological skills, academic sophistication, and confidence that will enable them to become successful students in graduate school or in other careers. And, finally, we value service to our communities through student groups, multicultural sororities and fraternities, and various outreach initiatives because we know that our academic work has tangible benefits to society at large. Our experience indicates that if students believe that their academic work is connected, or is relevant, to their lived experiences, they will find their educational experience more satisfying and productive.

While the work of OMA has traditionally been described as “student support services,” we fundamentally believe that the work of our unit merges both the academic arena and student services arena in some creative, responsive, and innovative ways. This artificial, yet pervasive, divide has sometimes relegated OMA’s work to the periphery, limiting our ability to effect change in the academic arena. The nexus of our student services and academic advancement work over the years has been, in many cases, the model for practices that academic programs now employ across the campus. For example, our student-centered approaches and community-building models are now embedded in the work done by undergraduate advising staff. The work of our Instructional Center served as the model for the launching of the Office of Undergraduate Education’s Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment, a program that provides instructional support to undergraduates in a wide range of fields. OMA’s Early Identification Program established the first undergraduate research conference on this campus in 1992, a model that is now followed by the campus-wide undergraduate research conference. OMA’s McNair Program produces an annual undergraduate research journal that showcases the work of diverse students working with faculty in a wide range of projects and disciplines, from astrophysics to neurobiology, and from sociology

to philosophy of science. The philosophy behind this approach is that we want our scholars to gain an early understanding of the critical role that publishing will play in their academic trajectories, so they are better prepared for careers in research and teaching. Other than on-line journal publications, this is the only research journal that showcases the work of diverse undergraduate research scholars at this institution.

In summary, OMA's academic development programs are multi-faceted, student-centered, and are designed to prepare our students for participation beyond the boundaries of the academic community.

They focus on developing the whole student, and they complement the work of academic departments and enrich the experience of students on our campus. This approach is central to our mission and is embedded in our work with diversity.

## **Engagement with the External Community**

OMA believes strongly that building and maintaining strong relationships with communities throughout the state creates positive results of increasing visibility of UW's diversity efforts, access to higher education for members of underrepresented groups, and responsiveness by the University to the interests of previously underrepresented students. The Office of the Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity has strengthened its relationships with ethnically and racially diverse communities by discussing with community leaders the status of diversity at the UW and seeking their input on educational and policy issues that will affect their communities. Numerous discussions have been held with community leaders regarding proposed policy changes affecting transfer students from community colleges. OMA works closely with advisory groups such as the Friends of EOP and the Native American Advisory Board.

In addition to linkages with communities in the State of Washington, OMA also has regional and national connections with institutions of higher education, advocacy organizations, and student support programs.

One clear example of this work is OMA's TRIO Training Program, a U.S. Department of Education funded opportunity for TRIO staff to develop expertise in using technology in the curriculum. TRIO Training has trained over 600 professional staff across the nation in the last two years. This work is considered a national model that continues to influence the way in which professional development is carried out among the TRIO community who work with first generation college goers and students from low-income backgrounds.

The most visible aspect of OMA's connection with the community is the work of our pre-college and recruitment staff (please see map in page 9 for an overview of our connection with the State). While this work is visible among the communities served, these efforts often go unnoticed by colleagues on this campus. This is an area where OMA might be of service to other departments who are interested in developing linkages with the larger community because active and visible work in the community through community presentations, service, and other activities has long term benefits for the institution and engender a sense of trust about the University, allow community members to develop ownership in the work of the institution, and provide a concrete representation of the University, rather than the abstract "Ivory Tower" notion that is pervasive in many communities.

An important priority for OMA since 2001 has been the active development of our fundraising capacity to sustain and build our student and academic support programs. One critical step in this direction has been the partnership between the Office of Development and OMA, which has led to the creation of a dedicated diversity development officer to work closely with our office.<sup>3</sup> This work is directly related to community engagement as we cultivate and strengthen our connections to alumni, donors, and supporters across the State of Washington and nationally.

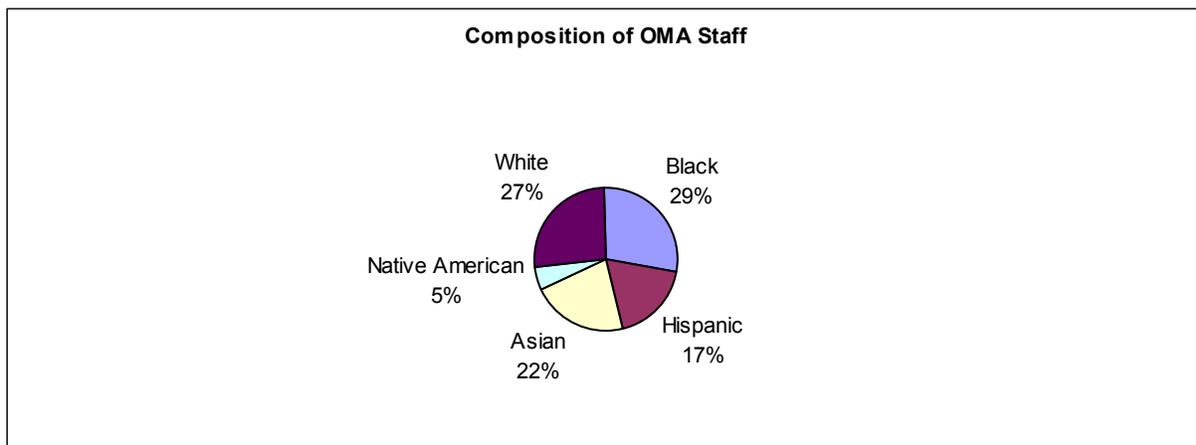
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<sup>3</sup> This position is fairly unique among higher education institutions. Only a handful of institutions have a dedicated development officer dedicated to work on behalf of diversity.

In addition to the efforts described above, OMA also works vigorously to get the message out about our work with students, the university, and the community. For example, each year we publish the *Contact* newsletter that highlights our accomplishments and discusses our organizational vision. OMA's website (<http://depts.washington.edu/oma/>) also provides an overview of our programs, our accomplishments, and key events that are planned during the year. These two mechanisms are concrete ways in which we can disseminate OMA's and the University's message to the external community.

### **Staff and Administrative Diversity**

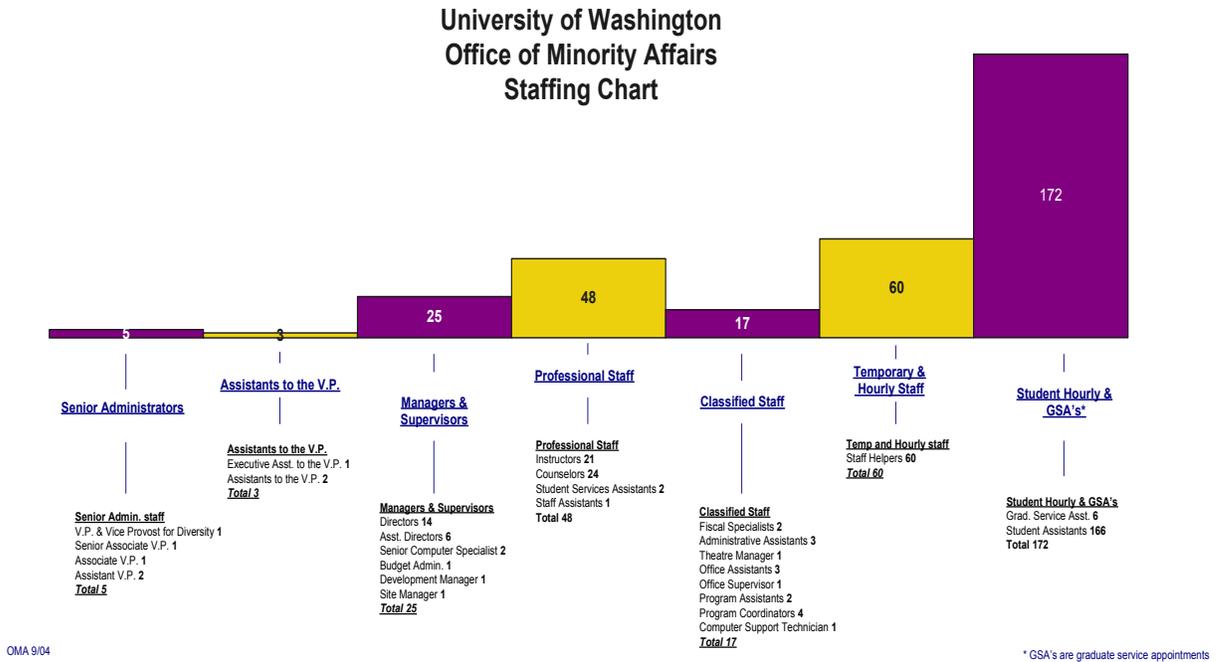
The Office of Minority Affairs has one of the most ethnically diverse staffs in the entire University. Our employment recruitment efforts reach out to diverse constituencies through advertising in ethnic newspapers and magazines, and through personal and professional contacts with diverse community leaders. OMA also employs a considerable number of undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom are individuals from diverse backgrounds. The entire work of our organization and individual programs would not be fully carried out without the support of undergraduate and graduate students.<sup>4</sup> They add significant value to our work and they contribute new ideas and energy to our day-to-day practices.



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<sup>4</sup> We believe that Graduate Service Appointments are an integral part of the retention mechanism for graduate students. These appointments provide not only financial support to students, but they also provide a support network that enables graduate students to complete degree requirements in a timely fashion.

In addition to ethnic diversity, OMA realizes a broad and inclusive diversity among its staff members, with people who have different physical abilities, sexual orientations, religions and national origins, and our diversity reflects the inclusive definition outlined in the call for reports issued by President Huntsman, Vice President Barceló, and the Diversity Appraisal Steering committee. Not only does the diverse composition of our staff provide a source of great pride for our organization, but it also provides us with a strategic advantage in helping us to accomplish our day-to-day work. Because our staff reflects the composition of the larger community, we can gain entry into diverse communities through our personal connections and affinity for the experiences of those with whom we work. Our staff members are also viewed as role models and liaisons as a result of ethnic, racial and other identities shared with our students and their families. The chart below highlights the distribution of OMA employees across several job categories, and highlights the total number of employees that are part of the organization.



Our directors and managers, like colleagues in other campus units, “wear multiple hats” in their day-to-day responsibilities. In addition to their administrative duties, our directors and managers also have advising, teaching, and mentoring responsibilities. They also serve on various OMA and campus-wide committees, and share responsibilities as ambassadors for our organization both within and outside the UW campus.

## **Curriculum and Research**

Traditionally, OMA’s focus has been on services to support student development rather than on curricular issues; however, OMA has become more active in this area as a result of several important developments. First, OMA’s Instructional Center has developed supplemental instruction in collaboration with faculty in several departments (e.g., math, biology, physics, chemistry, etc.) to enhance the learning and test taking skills of students from diverse backgrounds to assist students in coursework across disciplines. Second, OMA has also developed coursework in the General Studies curriculum for graduate education and student leadership. For example, the annual EIP Sophomore Seminar provides a learning opportunity for students interested in research and graduate education. The Diversity Leadership Seminar targets undergraduates in student organizations and teaches leadership skills, an understanding of the operation of the University, and discovering personal strengths in a multicultural world.

Third, OMA has been actively involved since 1992 in the work carried out by the Center for Curriculum Transformation, a Ford Foundation investment in the University of Washington and Washington State to incorporate cultural pluralism into the curriculum. For example, some of our staff members and administrators participated in the early round of workshops and seminars that lay the foundation for curricular transformations on our campus. Historically, funding for this work was the responsibility of the Office of Undergraduate Education (1992-1995) and the College of Arts and Sciences (1995-2004). In July 2004, Curriculum Transformation became a part of the Office of the Vice President and Vice

Provost for Diversity in order to provide better service to all academic units on the three University campuses. Working with an advisory group of faculty members from all campuses, schools and colleges in the University, the Center for Curriculum Transformation assists individual faculty members and academic units in developing courses and curricula that include the study of race, gender, ethnicity, nation and nationhood, class, disability, sexuality and religion and their intersections.

Fourth, one of the new areas of emphasis for OMA is research and assessment. During the last couple of years, OMA has developed an agenda to assess the work of our organization to examine work on behalf of diversity. Several projects related to diverse student retention and graduation have been carried out under the leadership of OMA's Associate Vice President, Emile Pitre. These projects include: Descriptive and Longitudinal Analyses of Enrollment, Graduation and Retention Data for UW Seattle; OMA Quarterly Retention Report; the 2003 State of African Americans at UW Seattle; the 2004 State of Native Americans at UW Seattle; the 2004 State of Hispanics at the UW Seattle; the 2004 State of Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders at the UW Seattle; The Minority Retention Study; and Teaching Them to Fish: Academic Support that Extends Beyond Tutoring. This work has been designed to serve as a resource for units and departments interested in examining their own retention efforts for diverse students.

Finally, the proposed Diversity Research Institute will bring together the community of scholars at the University of Washington for the purpose of generating new, interdisciplinary knowledge about diversity. It will complement diversity research at existing centers, link their efforts, and support their work. The Institute will provide services to scholars including a newsletter highlighting new diversity research, notices of funding opportunities, and assistance in submitting grants. A successful Diversity Research Institute will enable the University to enter into national conversations about how institutions advance goals of diversity and education. The Institute will produce the University's first diversity research inventory, diversity indicators and baseline data, best practices, and a publication on the state of diversity research in key areas of interest to Washington State and the nation. The Institute will build community

among scholars, generate new research, and improve our understanding of the challenges and opportunities of creating transformed institutions.

## **Climate**

The work of OMA over the past thirty years has, to some extent, attempted to address issues related to campus climate, especially as it relates to the experience of underrepresented students in what has been considered a hostile, unwelcoming campus environment. In order to provide an organizing framework that can help us to understand how OMA's work has impacted campus climate, we draw on the work of Hurtado et al. (1998), who identify four distinct aspects of campus climate that affect the lives of students, faculty, and staff. These dimensions include the institutional context (the historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion), structural diversity, the psychological dimension of climate, and the behavioral dimension. Each of these dimensions will be discussed in relation to the specific strategies and activities that OMA carries out to enhance campus climate.

### *Institutional Context*

While there has been some diversity in the faculty, students and staff in the University of Washington community throughout the twentieth century, student of color activists in the 1960s challenged the University to address issues of representation, access and curriculum. This was one of the first steps in helping the institution understand its history of exclusion. In 1968, the newly formed Black Student Union staged a sit-in at the office of then President Charles Odegaard, who listened and responded to the students' demands. Other groups of students joined in advocating for change, and together, students, faculty and staff members fought for funding for student groups, increased recruitment of faculty and staff of color, and curricular changes. Over the next five years, the University of Washington created the Office of Minority Affairs and the Ethnic Cultural Center, the first university-owned building dedicated to supporting people of color in a university environment in the country. During this time period, UW

faculty developed the programs that later became the departments of American Ethnic Studies, American Indian Studies and Women Studies. These developments, which attempted to discard a legacy of limited access for minority students, provided the initial institutional thrust to transform the campus climate. OMA was an integral component of this transformation. Today, OMA continues to work closely with the University administration and academic departments to ensure that the institution continues to have a vision of inclusiveness.

### *Structural Diversity*

The initial thrust of our work was to create an environment that enabled diverse students to gain access to the University and to fully integrate them into university life. To accomplish this, OMA focused on three key areas: admissions, financial aid, and retention programs. OMA worked closely with the Office of Admissions to design admissions practices that would enable students from diverse backgrounds to be admitted to the University. OMA also worked closely with the Office of Financial Aid to develop strategies to increase aid for students from minority, low-income and first-generation college backgrounds. OMA established an advising component to help students navigate the demands and requirements of the institution. And, our organization established programmatic components (e.g., the IC and ECC) to help students succeed academically and culturally within the University. Today, OMA continues to be integrally involved in helping to design admissions policies that are inclusive, and we work with Financial Aid to provide funding for our students. The organizational structure of OMA, which has a focus on pre-college and retention programs, is strategically geared towards both inclusion and the academic success of diverse students. Increasing the representation of diverse groups in our campus environment has been and continues to be an important dimension of OMA's work related to campus climate.

### *Psychological/Behavioral Dimensions of Climate*

The psychological dimensions of campus climate, according to Hurtado et al. (1998), “involve individuals views of group relations, institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes toward those from other racial/ethnic backgrounds than one’s own.” These elements can be transformed by having purposeful agents of socialization that work to enhance the campus psychological climate. OMA has been a key agent of socialization in this arena. The principal focus over the years has been to create an environment where students feel welcomed and through which their experiences and backgrounds are validated in university life, the curriculum, and campus organizations. To bring about this desired outcome, OMA has primarily sought to improve students’ access to, and experience within, various types of campus-based social networks. Campus-based social networks are purposeful support linkages (e.g., academic/social clubs or faculty/staff mentor relationships) that connect students to the institution in meaningful ways. Research on minority student retention suggests that students who join racial/ethnic-based organizations enhance the student’s sense of self and identity and lead to greater interest in both cultural and cross-cultural activities and interactions. The work of our Ethnic Cultural Center promotes the development of ethnic/racial student organizations, helps them to develop their leadership skills, and connects students with a variety of groups across the campus. We also work vigorously to help students build their informational capital. Informational capital includes such resources as a student’s overall academic preparation, her/his general collegiate policy awareness, her/his knowledge of the schooling process, and her/his familial educational credentials. Our pre-college preparation programs and outreach staff play an important role in this process. OMA’s Welcome Daze (i.e., the annual welcome and orientation event for new and returning OMA students) and OMA’s collaboration with alumni and community groups across Washington State serve as vehicles for building informational capital among students, parents, and the larger community. Similarly, our academic advisors help students understand the internalized perspectives (e.g., whether the student feels that s/he belongs in a certain major, or even in college at all) that shape the student’s expectations, goals, and aspirations.

Recent research also suggests that faculty play an increasingly important role in influencing students values and attitudes. As such, we cultivate strong relationships with faculty who have the sensitivity and enthusiasm for working with our students through mentoring and research opportunities. OMA has also worked with campus administrators to establish clear policies to address issues of discrimination and harassment. Our close collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs and the Equal Opportunity Office has been extremely beneficial in helping us establish protocols for dealing with campus conflicts. Student voices and perspectives are also included in OMA's decision-making processes. For example, the Minority Affairs Student Advisor Board provides input to the Vice President on programmatic directions, student activities, and policies. Finally, OMA promotes a strong sense of community within our organization through quarterly social and cultural events that bring staff members together to celebrate our work on behalf of diversity. We also work vigorously to promote community among our heterogeneous student population through recognition events, social gatherings, and graduation ceremonies. In addition, OMA staff contributes to a welcoming and supportive environment through our personal connections and affinity for the experiences of the students with whom we work. In summary, these multi-dimensional approaches have created a more inclusive and welcoming campus environment that has enhanced many aspects of campus climate.

## **Summary**

This report has highlighted the wide array of efforts carried out by the Office of Vice President for Minority Affairs and Vice Provost for Diversity to support the work of diversity at the University of Washington. It has illustrated the centrality of diversity in OMA's work, and the critical role OMA plays within the University in promoting and supporting diversity initiatives and programming. Our work over the years has moved from the margins to the periphery, as we have contributed in significant ways to

improving the academic experience for students from diverse backgrounds and in enhancing the campus climate for all constituents.

Diversity is a visible and active part of our unit by the very nature of OMA's work and the people who actively participate in the delivery of services to students. Diversity is the driving force behind the work we do on a day-to-day basis. Our success as an organization stems in part from the passion and commitment that we have for our work, an essential ingredient that cannot be overlooked. In addition, the skills and expertise developed over thirty years of working with and for students from diverse communities has given us a solid base on which to build our student development components. Our staff has competence and sensitivity, they serve as role models for students and the larger community, and they function as cultural liaisons that serve to exchange a sense of values between the University and the communities it serves.

OMA is proud of the work it has carried out for over thirty years and is committed to continuing this work in the coming years. As an integral part of the UW's commitment to diversity, OMA will continue to work to widen access to the University and provide academic services that will benefit all students. Diversity is indeed an active and visible part of OMA's work, and is embedded in our organizational mission and our core values.

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